Wright State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. As part of maintaining accreditation, Wright State’s programs and processes are periodically reviewed to ensure institutional quality and integrity. Wright State will be undergoing the 10 year Reaffirmation of Accreditation in the 2015-2016 academic year.

You are invited to an:

**Open Forum on University Accreditation**
May 1, 10:00 a.m.
Room E 156 Student Union

...to learn about the Higher Learning Commission's Reaffirmation of Accreditation process, Wright State’s preparation, and the upcoming peer review visit to our campuses in 2015-2016. Until the visit, you will be receiving monthly news-letters to inform you of the goals of accreditation, the criteria, and the accreditation process itself.

The Higher Learning Commission has ten underlying guiding values for the accreditation process. The first five values describe the Commission’s view of the primacy of education in the role of the university and the commitment to the continual improvement of the education programs.

**From The Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Values**

The Commission expects that institutions have the standards, the processes, and the will for quality assurance in depth and throughout its educational offerings.

1. **FOCUS ON STUDENT LEARNING**

For the purpose of accreditation, the Higher Learning Commission regards the teaching mission of any institution as primary. Institutions will have other missions, such as research, healthcare, and public service, and these other missions may have a shaping and highly valuable effect on the education that the institution provides. In the accreditation process, these missions should be recognized and considered in relation to the teaching mission.

A focus on student learning encompasses every aspect of students’ experience at an institution: how they are recruited and admitted; costs they are charged and how they are supported by financial aid; how well they are informed and guided before and through their work at the institution; the breadth, depth, currency, and relevance of the learning they are offered; their education through co-curricular offerings; the effectiveness of their programs; what happens to them after they leave the institution.

2. **EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC PURPOSE**

Every educational institution serves a public purpose. Public or state-supported institutions make that assumption readily. Not-for-profit institutions receive their tax-exempt status on the basis of an assumption that they serve a public purpose. And although it may appear that a for-profit institution does not require a public purpose, because education is a public good its provision serves a public purpose and entails societal obligations. Furthermore, the provision of higher education requires a more complex standard of care than, for instance, the provision of dry cleaning services. What the students buy, with money, time, and effort, is not merely a good, like a credential, but experiences that have the potential to transform lives, or to harm them. What institutions do constitutes a solemn responsibility for which they should hold themselves accountable.

3. **EDUCATION FOR A DIVERSE, TECHNOLOGICAL, GLOBALLY CONNECTED WORLD**

A contemporary education must recognize contemporary circumstances: the diversity of U.S. society, the
diversity of the world in which students live, and the centrality of technology and the global dynamic to life in the 21st century. More than ever, students should be prepared for lifelong learning and for the likelihood that no job or occupation will last a lifetime. Even for the most technical qualification, students need the civic learning and broader intellectual capabilities that underlie success in the workforce. The Commission distinguishes higher education in part on the basis of its reach beyond narrow vocational training to a broader intellectual and social context.

4. A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continuous improvement is the alternative to stagnation. Minimum standards are necessary but far from sufficient to achieve acceptable quality in higher education, and the strongest institutions will stay strong through ongoing aspiration. The Commission includes improvement as one of two major strands in all its pathways, the other being assurance that member institutions meet the Criteria and the Federal Requirements.

A process of assessment is essential to continuous improvement and therefore a commitment to assessment should be deeply embedded in an institution’s activities. Assessment applies not only to student learning and educational outcomes but to an institution’s approach to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

For student learning, a commitment to assessment would mean assessment at the program level that proceeds from clear goals, involves faculty at all points in the process, and analyzes the assessment results; it would also mean that the institution improves its programs or ancillary services or other operations on the basis of those analyses. Institutions committed to improvement review their programs regularly and seek external judgment, advice, or benchmarks in their assessments. Because in recent years the issues of persistence and completion have become central to public concern about higher education, the current Criteria direct attention to them as possible indicators of quality and foci for improvement, without prescribing either the measures or outcomes.

Innovation is an aspect of improvement and essential in a time of rapid change and challenge; through its Criteria and processes the Commission seeks to support innovation for improvement in all facets of institutional practice.

5. EVIDENCE-BASED INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING AND SELF-PRESENTATION

Assessment and the processes an institution learns from should be well-grounded in evidence. Statements of belief and intention have important roles in an institution’s presentation of itself, but for the quality assurance function of accreditation, evidence is critical. Institutions should be able to select evidence based on their particular purposes and circumstances. At the same time, many of the Assumed Practices within the Criteria require certain specified evidence.

From: The Criteria for Accreditation: Guiding Values

Higher Learning Commission